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## Virtual Logos – An Inclusive(ly) Political Alternative

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### Abstract

The study raises the problem of rendering logos secondary in our virtual times. This statement is described by the investigation of the consequence that *virtual logos* recalibrates the relation *logos-mentality-knowledge* through conceptual digressions and translations, as well as through re-description. Within this context, the working hypothesis of the paper is that *virtual logos* bears the hallmarks of a cultural and political de-legitimizing model. The purpose of this study is to verify the hypothesis reinterpreting the classical distinctions (such as practical rationality vs. theoretical rationality, understanding vs. explanation) and then validating the identified referential instances or manifestations of logos on the political sphere. The paper accepts the status of language as an institutional mode and code, gliding on various formulae for the logos user (of a postmodern nature). The methods, the findings and the results of the study describe a puzzle, a table of relating to different manners of conceptualization, a portrait of the appeal of virtual logos to the exteriorization of the stakes of narrative knowledge. In this approach, the authors are aware of the double legitimizing of science, where technology becomes a contending factor in relation to knowledge, maintaining the subordination in front of virtual power. As a piece in this puzzle, the authors also use the technique of interconnections, capitalizing on Lyotard's affirmation that the new technologies are *vulnerable to piracy*. This effect of novelty can be also found in the reactions of the third German political force – the Pirate Party – with effect in the legitimacy of protection for on-line software (protecting and maybe stimulating citizens' participation), reaction to the prospect of mere minimal *democracy*, symptom of the current post-industrial democracy. The conclusions and recommendations of the paper indicate, first, the virtual as a diminished model of politics, even more deprived of authenticity and maybe even more cynical. Second, at the same time, the paper shall emphasize that in this *Age of Less* (impoverished and codified communication, highly codified human relations, less human interaction), the realm of the virtual remains, nevertheless, both culturally and politically, a hope for increased citizen participation, as an alternative to the predictable failure of the technocrats and as counterweight to the disappointment with representative democracy.

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## 1. Introduction – Warning: the need to connect virtual possibilities to a conceptualization frame

The study raises the problem of rendering logos secondary in our virtual times. This statement is described by the investigation of the consequence that *virtual logos* recalibrates the relationship *logos-mentality-knowledge* through conceptual digressions and translations, as well as through re-description. Within this context, the working hypothesis of the paper is that *virtual logos* bear the hallmarks of a cultural and political de-legitimizing model. The purpose of this study is to verify the hypothesis reinterpreting the classical distinctions (such as *practical rationality vs. theoretical rationality*, *understanding vs. explanation*) and then validating the identified referential instances or manifestations of logos on the political sphere.

The essay accepts the status of language as an institutional mode and code, gliding on various formulae for the logos user (of a postmodern nature). The methods, the findings and the results of the study describe a puzzle, a table of relating to different manners of conceptualization, a portrait of the appeal of virtual logos to the exteriorization of the stakes of narrative knowledge. In this approach, we are aware of the double legitimating of science, where technology becomes a contending factor in relation to knowledge, maintaining the subordination in front of virtual power.

Following Virilio (1986) [1], representative democracy is nowadays transformed into a “democracy” an accelerated democracy, that is, a democracy whose characteristics are distorted by speed, dimmed and anamorphic. This characteristic speed of the present times is brought about by the new communication technologies, influencing interaction in society at various levels and with consequences not fully understood. Another element contributing to distortion, within this general acceleration of everything, is the hedonistic drive. The hasty forms of contemporary citizenship are manifestations of a world that maintains a speedy interest for values and causes that only blurs their content, without cancelling it entirely. He also develops and construes “dromology”, which is the “science of speed” in a cultural studies approach of society and politics. This artisan of “hyper modernism” does not further explore the divergence between modernism and modernity, but he rather criticizes both, from the standpoints of a catastrophic perception of technology, as a “critic of the art of technology”.

Jean Baudrillard (1988) [2] envisioned a disappearing world of simulations, while for Virilio (1997) [3] we live in a world under the sign of hyper-modernism, beyond the realm of postmodernism, influencing and contributing to it to a certain extent. The implicit aspects (and meanings) of society and politics, social and political actors, and socio-political phenomena overtake the fore – “because there is an obvious quality of the implicit” – to the detriment of the explicit and even to the detriment of the intended aspects and meanings and the cultural quality of knowledge on democracy, society and politics which is impoverished.

The social capital is (also) blurred inside an accelerated democracy, which seems virtual, but it did not become already virtual, while it is just moving far too quickly. And the more society speeds ahead, the more it leaves behind the sense of community, and the more there become apparent, precisely the negative tendencies in the dynamic nature of the community, such as reduction, restriction, or exclusion, all speeding along toward a community of people who have not much left in common (Alphonso Lingis -1994 [4], Emmanuel Levinas [5] - 1998). Hyper-modernism as well as postmodernism could indicate for most a world without direction, severed from criteria, knowledge and education, but they provide valuable lessons for communities and for an education that rethinks the idea of community. As Lingis has written: “For me, the world is, from the start, a field of possibilities others have apprehended and comprehended; possibilities for others. What I find as possibilities for me are possibilities others have left me” (1994, 177). These can be accepted as philosophical and educational possibilities, too; the catastrophic vision of Virilio (1997) states, in our terms that speed makes impossible for us to perceive these possibilities.

In Lingis’ view, the core of community remains the communicational interaction: “There are then two entries into communication – the one which depersonalizes one’s visions and insights, formulates them in the terms of the common rational discourse, and speaks as a representative, a spokesperson--equivalent and

interchangeable with others--for what has to be said. The other entry into communication is that in which you find it is you, you saying something that is essential" (1994, 116). Virilio himself advocates this type of resistance to *domocracy* and all its communication and technology related evils.

Re-approximating the parallax under which postmodernism could reveal a series of approaches to the virtual knots of reality (in order to be processed and resized according to restrictions or, appropriations, of the technical platform), the present intervention investigates another reality, a consequence of socio-cultural ideological and technological frameworks, prone to absorb some traditional elements, affirming the hybrid nature of the virtual world, vibrant to the signs and signals felt also as a consequence of the European cultural-economic crisis.

On the evident cleavage between "mass" and "high culture", along with the positioning of the logos on the place and importance of the secondary, the virtual recalibrates a neutral value phenomena, produced in laboratory and delivered industrially in order to be consumed in different percentage by the mass. From this affirmation one can easily observe the fact that, whatever remains after the dislodging a problem, forms a system, harmonizing the canonizing reflexes (*logos-mentality-knowledge*) with all the effects felt from the translation of the opened systems towards a delegate concepts configuration. The intervention will accept, in a postmodern key, the *transplant concept* – as a correlation of the different ways of conceptualization, or in a modern way, a construing of the ways of substituting a substance with another.

The virtual implication confirms the fact that the narrative production has passed from *figurate to intrinsic*, standardized through the mechanical reproduction and the adaptation to the dysfunctional political alternatives, as a rhizome of the contemporary internet. We would be placed, therefore, in the presence of *immersion, interactivity and avatarization*, as brands of a triple dependence, according to which, if the interactivity of the virtual world grows, immersion becomes more difficult, or, if the consummator avatar is more complex, immersion will strongly organized itself. The phenomena implies not only the simple construction of a *virtual topos*, or a geographically and a temporal topological place, which is discontinuous and fragmentary, but supplying the technical meanings of the immersion, as an instrument which facilitates projections at the edge of reality.

It is easy to find that, the post-metaphysical coordinates re-orientate the language route toward the option of a secondary, virtual language or *language in use*.

## 2. Recycling communicational action: Archetype and Virtual Logos

On the route of interconnection of the archetype to the cultural, psycho-social domain, the effort of the integration in the *summa* of the social-scientific values, archetypes become a reaction to the hegemonic temptation felt from the declared intention of the ideology to bring to a common denominator the usages of political modernism.

Moreover, the archetype status, resistant to a mobile background and re-anchored inside a mythical thinking that remains impregnated with the assault of the logos on the political sphere, will propose a possible linguistic turn assumed by recognizing the hermeneutical dimension of knowledge and a critical-reflexive one, announced by the conjunction of knowledge with interest and of the specific technical, practical, emancipator types of interaction, rebuilt in the interaction of *labour, language-and- domination* mechanisms.

Placing the *speech* as an institutional way and the *language* as a code under the signs of a legislative reconstruction of the community, we can accept the fact that the political community seems to resonate to the ideology-making potential of the access formula inside owning and de-legitimizing the politics.

According to Murray Edelman (1967) [6], the signification and the response are sacred actions accomplished through language, which denounce the unique symbolic force, stronger and more ideological as it is harder to be perceived and related to the social group which sets it on social and political use. As an interpretation of the multi-dimension structures, oscillating between the definitive anchorage inside the archetype or the cliché, Marshall McLuhan (2006) [7] recovered the "chemical bondage" (construing in social terms the contributions of

Heisenberg or Linus Pauling) of the fusion between the archaic attitudinal towards the cliché, seeing the modern archetype as a new technical product, establishing that the technological media have the effect of eliminating precedent cultural clichés or re-defining them in different contexts. And from the image of society as group picture of the subjects acting in a communicational way, J. Habermas (2000) [8] extracts the profile of the *original skeptic* and the *radical one* – practicing the refusal of the proved argument – where the *skeptic* goes through a second change – passing through the communicational action towards a strategic one.

For Marshall McLuhan (2006) the profile of the *logos user* can be placed inside Plato's cave, which is now a workroom. This kind of archetypes deposit images of self connection of modular fragments, as *allforabit*, making everything out of bits/bites, specialized both in producing objects and in the automatic way of recycling them, into a permanent production. The recycling method denounces the virtual resistance in maintaining itself at a single level, as a circuit effect, recognizable also in the Plato's cave, a cave where multi-stratified phenomena are discarded.

Translated in the de-legitimizing register of knowledge, with reflexes in the action instruments, the crisis of scientific knowledge comes from the internal erosion, from the shuffled proliferation with effects in the weakened effect of encyclopedias', and in releasing the speculative game, charging the technical territory with individualism, with dilution of the social subject and with the construction of a personal language. The symptomatic is an apparent one, Linda Hutcheon states (2002) [9], considering that the postmodern poetics has the role to re-ordinate the cultural knowledge, to explain the theory and to recognize even the mass culture embedment to the ideological and esthetic fundaments.

Taking over the classical distinctions of the *practical rationality vs. the theoretical one*, that of the opposition among/between *understanding* (that of the *Science of Spirit*) and *explanation* (as an *objective knowledge form, of physical world's sciences*), Habermas (2000) notices just the emancipation of science from the methodological and teleological "guide" delivered by philosophy, beyond the anthropological turn, as a post secular "sociological predicate". Moving into a political and philosophical key, the ideologies/ legitimacy of the norms in the sense of apparent justification, contradict the communicational action, in a pure sense, as maintain the real consensus and the false/apparent dichotomy. According to Habermas (2000), the route of *communicational action to discourse* (its product), ingrain the accomplishment of the real consensus and guaranty the satisfaction of the indicator of real choices. The symmetric divisions of chances – that of choosing/ exercising speech acts, in the context of a inhibited communication, far from the contingent external influences or coercions – confers not only the possibility of changing the roles inside a dialogue, but also, the effective equality of assuming the roles, inside a triple reference: *enunciation – relationship speeches – expression – following the rules*.

From Habermas' (2000) point of view, hermeneutics regards the language/ the thing/ the way in which the participants gain a mutual understanding, the objectivities pretensions and the capacity of expressing, re-orientating the demarcation signs between *hermeneutic objectivism – radical hermeneutics vs. hermeneutic reconstructions*. From the differentiation participation – observation, interprets renounce to the privileged position of the observer, implicating inside the (even virtual) negotiation on the sense and validity of the enunciations. This is, in fact, a *per-formative attitude*, as a way of de-contextualization of the significance, establishing that the language extends also upon the un-descriptively enunciation and upon the un-cognitively pretention of availability (2000, 31).

Enunciating the essential notes of the *ethics of discourse*, the way of explaining the philosophical ethics approaches the pretensions raised along with the reporting of the norms to the linguistic actions. For Habermas (2000), essentially remains the necessary distinction among the ethics of discourse and the theory of knowledge, with all the failure felt from the canonical philosophical positions (metaphysical theories, intuitionist ethical valour, emotive, prescriptivism). The programmatic foundation of the *ethics of discourse* (almost in a therapeutic way) reclaims communication as a generalizing principle, which functions as an argumentation rule, through the

identification of the pragmatically premises with a normative contain, because the *communicational action* *reclaims an auto –substitutive organization*.

### 3. Virtual Logos – a de- legitimate alternative

Taking over some concepts from J. Fr. Lyotard (2003) [10], one can observe that the virtual logos uses the exteriorization of the narrative knowledge, accepting the double de-legitimizing of the science, in which technology becomes the declared goal, sustaining the subordination to the virtual power. He has warned about the fact the new technologies providing useful dates in taking a decision are vulnerable to pirating acts, thus clamming re-evaluations from a formative political point of view in relation to their dissemination. Certainly, his assertion hasn't prefigured the practical model of an actual alternative – The Pirate Party –, the third political force activating in Germany, betting on the legitimating the on-line software, of citizen participation, able to dissolve efficiently the political organizations as a minimal democracy sign, re-engaging the signs of a new post-industrial democracy.

The abolishment of the rigid separation between producers vs. consumers, extended also upon the political sphere, arouses the exaltation in the presence of an opportunity of exceeding the nowadays dysfunctions of the European social/political model, and the evidence that virtual could diminish the way that politics is being made. Integrated to an *Age of Less*, the democratic pattern is reclaimed the annexation of the virtual, as an improve effect of transparency, citizen participation and as an alternative solution for the evident technocrats failure.

Anchoring the virtual logos inside a political de-legitimate formula, we cannot avoid also the nowadays Estonian initiative that of an *e-state project*, of a *digital identity* as an *e-residence*, through a digital data exchange, of X-tee and the digital identity cards. The Romanian interventions have reacted to such a virtual-digital projects, establishing, culturally, that between *Copyright & (Co)pirate, we are all pirates!* as a reaction through the *cultural flat fee* to the pressures felt from the *unload and download* culture.

As an absolutely de-legitimate way, The Pirate Party ("Piratenpartei Deutschland" or "PIRATE") following the opened route of the "Piratpartiet" from Sweden, although considered a "chaotic bunch", a "protest party without a real political agenda", translates a success fairytale, delivering the virtual as a political platform and establishing that the internet is the "birthplace and living space of a communication society, the key to the transformation, as freedom through the erosion of hierarchy and authority, through participation and pluralism". The Pirate Party assumes the fact that it is the only German party that treats "freedom not just as an idealistic utopia or an economic principle but as a very real tenet of organization" – a success de-legitimate formula coming from the rejection of conventional political views. The virtual is placed inside an "unconditional basic income", because according to Pirate's political platform, free communication is a catalyst for the advancement of society, translated through the new open standards as a protocol or format which meets the de-legitimate criteria such as: "all participants have full, equal and public access and can evaluate and use it equally"; "there are no components or extensions that depend on formats or protocols which do not conform to the definition"; "there are no legal or technical clauses that restrict use by any party or business model"; development is" independent of any one manufacturer, in a process that is open to equal participation by competitors or third parties"; different complete "implementations by different manufacturers are available, or it is a completely free implementation" (see, in this sense, more details on <https://www.piratenpartei.de/>).

Cutting out from their political mission, The Pirate Party is preoccupied with the European unity, peace, liberty, prosperity and deliberate good governance, as a part of the trans-national politics based on communication, freed by the state boundaries, with a special responsibility in more transparent Europe through virtual democratization.



#### 4. Conclusions

In a possible conclusion, cutting up the sceptical futurologists view, an analyst as Matthias Horx (2007) [11], takes the distances from over charging the virtual with the attributes of a platform for the participative democracies, considering that the mediated electronic space is just a channel of communication which amplifies all the secondary discourses, prophesying that the future doesn't belong to the pirates... but to trolls.

According to Pierre Brunel (2003) [12], inside the global network, the virtual organizes itself as an ontological plurality's paradigm, an untouchable universe, time without temporality, space without spatiality.

The present study's conclusion is, following Derrida's correspondence with Jean-Louis Hodebine (2001) [13], that through virtual logos (translated cultural, political or philosophical) we are in the presence of alter-positioning, as spatial formula of recording inside the social and political practices of a virtual logos as a system without superstructure pretentions, a productive movement, opened to the informatics object or product.

We cannot avoid also the transplantation of the symbolic centre inside the virtual medium, trough the negotiation between multiple power sub-centres and all the reflexes felt from the official reports (Comision ou Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS); Information Literacy Group, Report'94, Information Literacy; Work Group on Information Competence, Commission on Learning Resources and Institutional Technology (CLRIT) California State University (CSU) System, Rapport, December, 1995; State University of New York (SUNY) Council of library Directors, Information Literary Initiative, 30 September 1997 etc.) [14] on the boundaries of the informational culture – as an ability of locating, evaluating and using information in order to maintain/ use the proper aspects for resolving the problems of constructing the message.

Our conviction is that virtual mediates the passing of the opened work to an opened society, in the sense that, what aesthetics loses, politics gains in popularization, and in free and extensive emission, far from any censorship (the evidence is also sustained by the first position as Internet accessing, inside the blog and journal platform – Estica.ro, of the intervention from 20 February 2013, Viorella Manolache, *The Pirate Party and the Age of Less* – as an incipient form/signal for the present elaborated study).

The symbiosis, firstly, between the real and the virtual logos, leads to a secondary reality, maintaining though all the axiological and ontological coordinates of the first one.

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